

and native violet, the Illinois state flower. Bringing this native vegetation back to an environment that is now urban, has not been an easy task. For example, Mr. Kline has had to replace the garden's urban soil. Mr. Kline has upheld his strong determination to complete his vision for the garden, diligently researching native plants and remaining patient with the garden. Mr. Kline is growing non-native flowers such as tulips to provide some color to the garden, while he is waiting for the soil to become rich enough for a complete native garden.

Mr. Kline's hard work and dedication to the 225 square foot library garden was featured in a recent article in the Chicago Tribune. Mr. Kline has also received the Library Volunteer Recognition Award in 1996 and 1997 for his hard work and numerous volunteer hours.

I hope that you will join me in recognizing Mr. John Kline's strong dedication to the betterment of the people of his community, as well as the land on which they live.

#### ANNIVERSARY OF THE TRAGIC PORT CHICAGO EXPLOSION: OP- PORTUNITY TO CLEAR THE NAMES OF CONVICTED SAILORS

##### HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 17, 1998

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, today is the 54th anniversary of the terrible explosion and loss of life at Port Chicago Naval Weapons Station during World War II. A number of survivors, their families and community supporters are gathering today at a memorial on the site of the explosion to mark the anniversary and continue the effort to clear the names of sailors that were wrongly convicted of mutiny after refusing to resume loading munitions in the aftermath of the tragedy.

I was proud to write the law in 1992 that established a National Memorial at the site of the explosion and where the ceremony today is being held.

A little over a half century ago this site was a vital supply center during the crucial phase of World War II in the Pacific. From this site, the munitions that liberated much of Asia from totalitarianism were shipped, and the history of the world was changed.

But as we know, we remember Port Chicago today for another reason as well. Fifty-four years ago tonight, one of the largest pre-nuclear explosions in world history occurred right here. Two supply ships, a supply train, and hundreds of brave and dedicated sailors were vaporized. The devastation was unparalleled in the history of World War II here in the United States with the singular exception of Pearl Harbor.

Today, most of the scars of WWII have healed, and from the ashes of that war a new Asia has arisen. But not all the scars are healed.

For several years, as many of you know, I have been leading an effort, along with the help of our colleague Representative PETE STARK and our former colleague Ron Dellums, to close the books on the one remaining issue in the Port Chicago story: purging the convictions of the sailors who did not return to ship loading operations immediately following the explosion.

Those sailors were neither traitors nor deserters, as some have suggested. They sought the same post-traumatic leave as was allowed their white officer counterparts—leave they were denied because of their race. They sought remediation of the unquestionably hazardous conditions involved in loading the ships which undoubtedly contributed to the events leading to the explosion, including the dangerous competition among loading crews provoked by officers.

Now, along with 40 or our colleagues in the House of Representatives, I am seeking the personal intervention of President Clinton to clear these records. As many of you know, the Navy has already acknowledged that race was an important factor in many aspects of life in the Navy and at Port Chicago in 1944. Their race denied black sailors the opportunity to serve in combat situations. They were assigned to loading operations exclusively because of race, and they were subjected to hazardous conditions in those loading operations because they were black. And ultimately, they were denied equal treatment from the Navy after the explosion solely because of their race.

Their convictions were wrong because they resulted from a system that the highest military officials of this nation now acknowledge was racially biased against black people. The time has long passed for these convictions to be overturned. As the San Francisco Chronicle editorialized on March 1 of this year:

The United States should be a strong enough country to acknowledge that it makes mistakes, especially in the fervor of a world war, and its harsh judgment of these men was indeed a mistake.

That is why the State Legislature unanimously voted to ask President Clinton to intervene: when race taints one aspect of an issue, when it creates the context in which a condition exists, it is a factor in what results from those conditions. That is why these convictions must be expunged.

Whenever I speak out on behalf of the Port Chicago sailors, there is always someone who writes to criticize my efforts. But recently, someone wrote with another perspective that I want to share with you today, a man in Rancho Mirage, California, whose late uncle, a long-time Navy man, was severely injured by the Port Chicago explosion. Here is what he wrote:

[I]t certainly is understandable that those who were loading the ammunition and who were treated so shabbily by their superiors (almost as if they were completely expendable fodder) would definitely not want to go back into the situation. I wouldn't either. These men deserve to have their names cleared and their dignity restored. I don't doubt that my uncle would have wanted the same thing.

So, on this 54th anniversary on this historic tragedy, let us both recall the bravery and sacrifice of those who served and those who died here at Port Chicago in pursuit of peace and justice. And let us include a prayer for those who served here and who still seek justice from the government they risked their lives to defend.

I will continue my efforts to secure a fair hearing and justice for the sailors of Port Chicago, and their families and survivors, and with the support of the survivors, their families, the families of the victims and the community at large we will secure that justice that has eluded these men for a half century.

#### THE FOOD SAFETY ENFORCEMENT ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 1998

##### HON. JOHN ELIAS BALDACCI

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 17, 1998

Mr. BALDACCI. Mr. Speaker today I, along with a host of my colleagues, am introducing the Food Safety Enforcement Enhancement Act of 1998. I believe that one of this government's fundamental responsibilities is ensuring that Americans have the safest food possible.

The recent outbreaks of E. coli across the country have caused illnesses and at least one death. A woman in her 90s from Washington County, Maine, died after becoming infected.

The outbreak has shaken the confidence of American consumers. Americans are stunned when they learn that the Secretary of Agriculture does not have the authority to demand a recall of contaminated meat. The Secretary cannot impose civil fines on a company that knowingly or repeatedly violates food-safety laws.

Consumers, farmers and ranchers are all asking that more be done to prevent food-borne contamination and that something be done to stop the spread of contaminated meat once it is discovered.

The legislation, developed with the United States Department of Agriculture, and introduced as a companion to a bill sponsored by Senator HARKIN, would give the Department some common-sense powers.

It requires notification of the USDA when contaminated meat or poultry products are discovered. It gives the Secretary the authority to recall contaminated meat and poultry as soon as it is discovered. It also gives the Secretary the authority to levy civil penalties on slaughterhouses and processors for violations of food safety laws.

I view this as the beginning of a process to identify ways to foster improvements in the meat and poultry food chain that can lead to improved public safety, enhanced consumer confidence and acceptance by producers, processors and consumers of their shared responsibilities in ensuring that Americans continue to enjoy the safest and most abundant food supply in the world.

#### AFFORDABLE HOUSING SHORTAGE AND FEDERAL MORTGAGE PRE- PAYMENTS

##### HON. MARTIN OLAV SABO

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 17, 1998

Mr. SABO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my serious concerns about the critical shortage of affordable housing across our country and its devastating impact on a growing number of people—particularly in my home city of Minneapolis and in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. The Twin Cities have a rental housing vacancy rate of less than 2 percent—5 percent is considered full occupancy.

The lack of sufficient new production of affordable rental housing is now being exacerbated by the increasing number of federally-subsidized mortgages that are being prepaid.